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ABSTRACT

Many parents who wish to help their children with reading at home need assistance in choosing the right technique. This illustrated guide for parents outlines simple enrichment experiences designed to encourage and develop children's reading skills. Each experience assumes a positive parent attitude and aims at stimulating thinking and arousing curiosity. Activities include the following: development of the senses through observation of nature, smelling flowers, or growing a garden; communication between parent and child through oral reading; trips to different environments such as the beach, a neighborhood, or places of business; visits to the library; and book discussions. (MAI)

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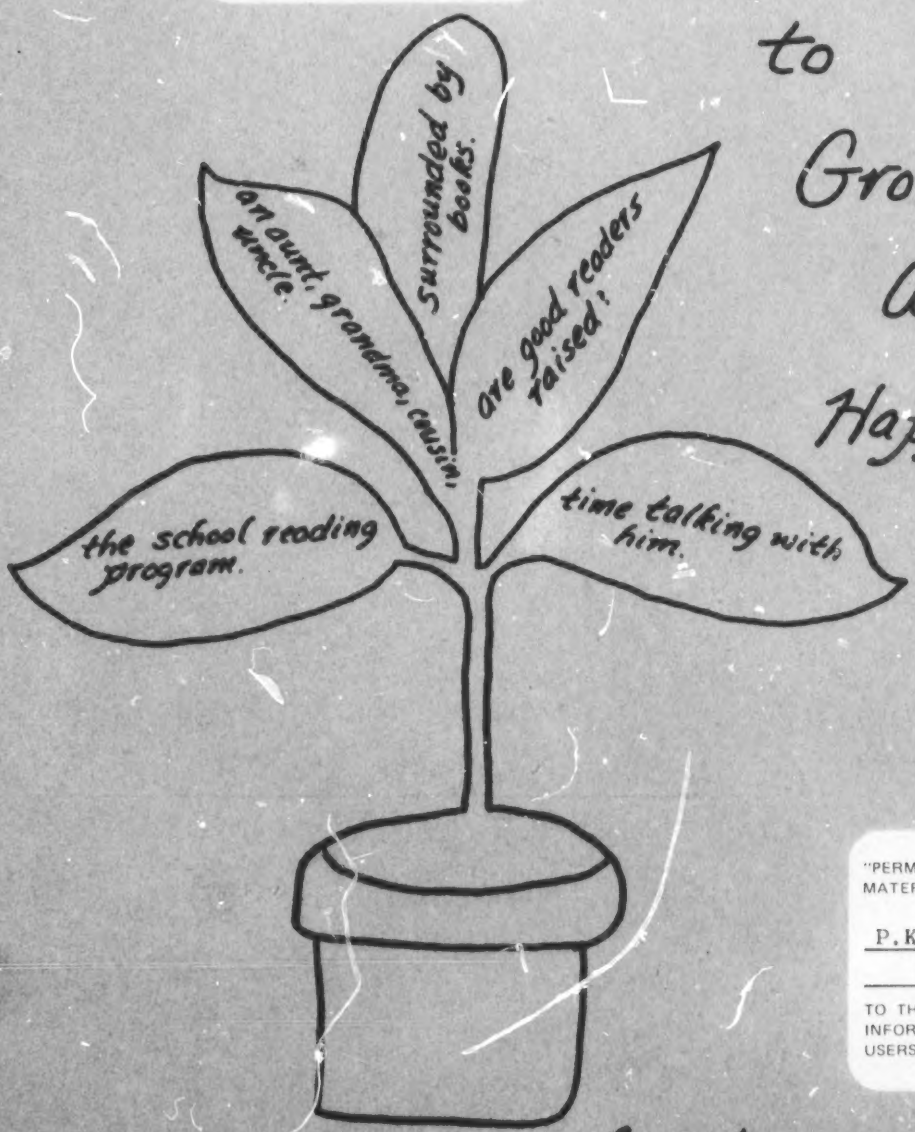
# How to Grow a Happy Reader


Surrounded by books.
an aunt, grandma, cousin, uncle.
are good readers raised?
the school reading program.
time talking with him.

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A gardening guide for parents

by
Mary Siders
P.K. Yonge Laboratory School

Resource Monograph
Number 16

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# Note to parent gardeners

This booklet is written for you, the parents of my students.

A parent is a partner in any reading program and it is through our cooperative efforts that we can best grow a reader.

Many parents want to help their child at home but often don't know where to begin or feel they may not do the right thing or use the right technique.

With this in mind, this booklet is designed to suggest ways you can help and things you can do.

It is hoped that this booklet will help student interest in reading to bud, parent-teacher communication to increase and the togetherness of parent-child to grow.

The activities, suggestions and ideas contained in this booklet can be used with any elementary age student at his/her own developmental level. As simple as it may seem, the most important thing you as a parent can do is to talk with your child and provide and share together many experiences. The establishment of a rich background and the right attitudes is an important and basic role of parents.

We believe that oral language and varied experiences contribute more to reading than all the silent exercises ever conceived.

Please wear these pages thin with much use, by returning to them periodically as a reminder, a motivating factor, a resource or whatever it might be to say to you.....

"You are not only the first teacher of your child, but are the most important one he will ever have!"

Through our cooperative efforts a reader will blossom!

# Why do children read?

Through reading, children push back the limitations of their world and see and experience more than the immediate scene offers them of people, things and events. A child's real world is narrow and books are his ticket to anywhere.

One of the great joy's of reading is self discovery. Comfort lies in discovery that other children feel as I do, others get frightened, lonely and want things too.

Children read for many reasons.

sometimes children read for the quest of information.

sometimes children read to have an outlet for emotions, not easily expressed in their daily lives.

and sometimes they read to pass the time...

Hopefully they always read for fun!

# How To Begin?

What a child gets out of reading depends in part on what he brings to the printed page.

Giving your child a background of experiences and language which provides him new concepts and new vocabulary is probably the most important contribution you can make toward his reading success.

Well chosen new experiences will delight him, stimulate his thinking and arouse his curiosity.

First hand experience is needed for the child to be able to appreciate happenings when he sees pictures of them, hears about them from someone else or reads about them.

Experience adds meaning....
and there are many ways in which you can provide these new experiences for your child... and thus stimulate questions....
.... so.....

. . . .

try this approach....

... and ....

Grow Yourself a

Happy

Reader !

# prepare some rich soil

Look at pictures together and make up stories about them.

Suppose that you have just read the story Where the Wild Things Are and the child begins to tell you about the wild things of his dreams. If you write even a line or two for the child to read and illustrate, I think you will find he is very interested and pleased.

Be sure your child has a chance to feel velvet, to smell flowers, to see rainbows, to hear the sound of the sea, and talk, talk, talk with him and listen and listen, and praise and trust and love him.

Planting a few flower seeds in a pot, or a row of lettuce or radishes in the yard will provide excitement. With a garden of their own children become more interested in all plant life and have more questions to ask.

Help your child to dial and use the telephone.

Perhaps he has seen a dog-fight outside and he comes bursting in to tell you about it. As soon as the excitement dies down a bit, suggest that he slow down so that you can write down his story.

Watch T.V. together and discuss good and bad shows.

Acquiring a pet will bring pleasure, plus a considerable amount of experience. The animal gives much to talk about and read about. The child will welcome a book about the species or breed.

# challenge your child to explore different environments

**Daytime neighborhood environment**
Walk around the neighborhood with your child, answering questions, pointing out and explaining objects and places of interest and letting the child set his own pace, pausing here and there to watch or examine whatever captures his attention, and after getting home, talk about what you have seen and done.

**Post office environment**
Before taking your child to the post office, the parent should tell him about the clerks who sell stamps, weighs packages and sorts mail; the individual letter boxes; and the places to put mail in slots inside or mailboxes outside. When approaching the building point out the American flag flying outside and try to give your child some idea of the postal service being conducted by our government. Inside your child can observe the operation in progress.

**The fire station environment**
After seeing and hearing a fire engine go by, the child's excitement may have led to talk about fires and how firemen put them out. plan a trip to the fire station. Tell him why we have fire stations, destribe the different kinds of vehicles they use, the chief's car, the pumping truck, the ladder truck, the use of sirens, how they get word of a fire, and how they are on duty day and night.

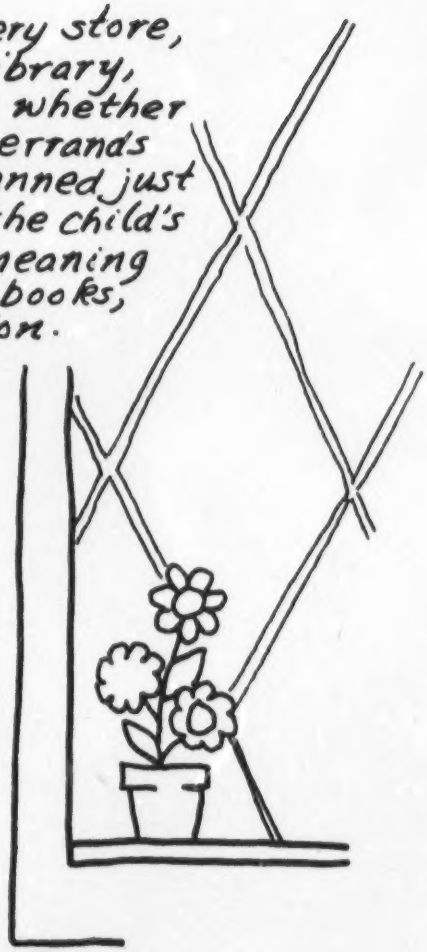
**Nightime Environment**
Take a nightime walk. The child explores familiar places that at night seem new and mysterious. There will be much to talk about afterward. Where is the sun? Why is the grass wet? new sights and sounds require new words, and the eager child learns them rapidly in conversation with the interested parent. (Take along a flashlight)

**The beach environment**
The beach affords all sorts of opportunities for play and learning. There are sand castles to build, the chance to learn how to swim, and talks about how the ocean surrounds us and connects us with other countries.

continued .....

## different environments .....

Similiar trips to the grocery store, bank, gas station, church, library, greenhouse, or laundromat whether made in connection with errands the parent has to do, or planned just for the child, will widen the child's horizon and help to add meaning to his reading, picture books, television, and conversation.



Work environment

When the parent works away from the home, he/she should arrange for the child to find out more about what goes on between the time the parent leaves for work in the morning and the time the parent returns at night.

experiences through exploring different environments...

.... contributes to reading success.

# plant the seed

and establish a child's positive attitude toward reading.

Children are imitative. They are more likely to seek out books if they grow up in a home where adults turn to books. If you read, your children are likely to read too!

Your respect for reading will show in the way you speak of books and the time you devote to your child's interest in books.

If you buy books they know that books are important to adults.

If you borrow regularly from the library, your child will soon want a library card of his own.

By seeing you read newspapers, magazines, books, etc. children will establish a positive attitude toward reading.

Reading is
Caught
as well as
Taught!

What if the parent doesn't like to read at home?.....

....Well.....

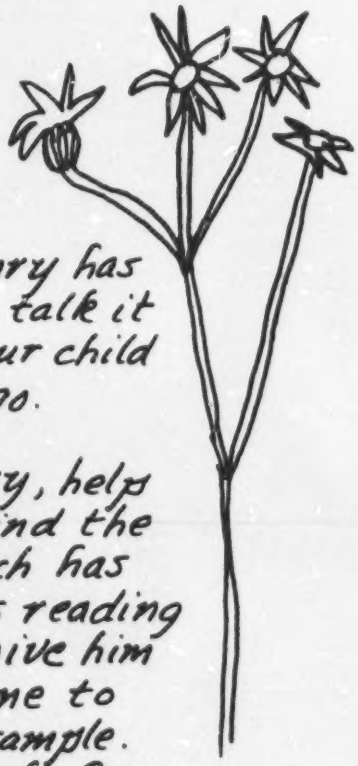
Of course,
not all parents are
confirmed readers
and book lovers.
Unless you grew
up enjoying books, you
may feel after a hard
day's work that a book
is the last thing you
want

even so .....

you can help establish
a child's positive attitude
toward reading.

For example .....

# Provide a Good Growing Environment



If the library has a story hour, talk it over with your child and plan to go.

At the library, help your child find the section which has books for his reading level. Then give him plenty of time to browse and sample. Pick some books for yourself if you are interested, while he is making his choices. But don't hurry-the thoughtful reader needs time to decide on a book.

A child want's some books to call his own. If he has a place to keep his books, he takes more pride in adding new ones.

Encourage your child to speak freely and fully so he becomes a master of oral language.

Read aloud to your child every day.

Help your child to find books and stories that match his interests.

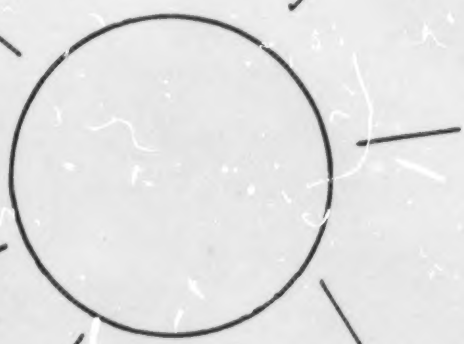
Surround him with good books.

Be sure there is a comfortable place with a good light for reading.

Encourage your child to talk about the books he has been reading or wants to read.

The parent must be a very good listener, and be genuinely interested in what the child knows, thinks, imagines, feels and is curious about... and try to tell him whatever he wants to know.

# Lots of Sunshine



Be sure your child is physically fit. Good food, play, and plenty of sleep are all important.

Help your child to know other children.

Encourage your child to become self-confident, to act independently when appropriate, and to assume his share of responsibility.

Always keep in mind that the happy and relaxed child who knows he is loved and appreciated stands the best chance for....

... reading success.

# feed your reader Well

Show your child that you have confidence in him. Praise him for things well done.

Talk, Talk, Talk with your child. As you talk with him about his interests, what you are doing, and what is going on around him, you will be helping to increase his vocabulary, improve his speech patterns and stimulate his thought, thus preparing him for reading success.

Don't be afraid to raise questions you can't answer. Most adults are hazy on Science, geography and history. This very lack of information is a very good reason to say "Let's look it up."

Your child will start a habit that will benefit him for the rest of his life:

The habit of going to books for information and satisfaction.

# What to read?

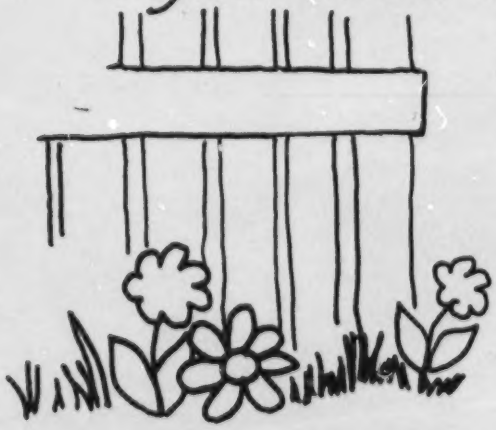
Use your child's questions as leads to reference books and further reading of all kinds.

Let your child choose the rhyme or story to be read. Let him revel in the familiar and then introduce a new story.

Read aloud from the most thrilling and beautiful books you can find.

Use your child's interests and hobbies to choose books and magazines you think he will enjoy.

Talk with your child's teacher or the school librarian about books best suited to your child's reading ability and interests.



There are many published book lists you might consult for ideas, but the best clues come from your child and his interests.

see A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading by Nancy Larrick

# When to Read?

Parents.....
read daily!

Make sure you plan a regular time for reading aloud each day.

Many children and parents prefer just before bedtime to share reading time.

Be sure to make it the same time each day, so the child will look forward to it as he does lunch or dinner.

Try to provide a quiet time in your day and that of your child — a time without T.V., talking, telephoning, and tensions. In this break away from noise, reading and thinking can flower. It may be the best part of a child's education.

Establish a time when it will not interfere with something else the child wants to do.

For your child....
reading should be allowed to flourish whenever the child is interested.

# How to Read?

Impart your own enjoyment of the book.

Stop frequently to look at pictures.

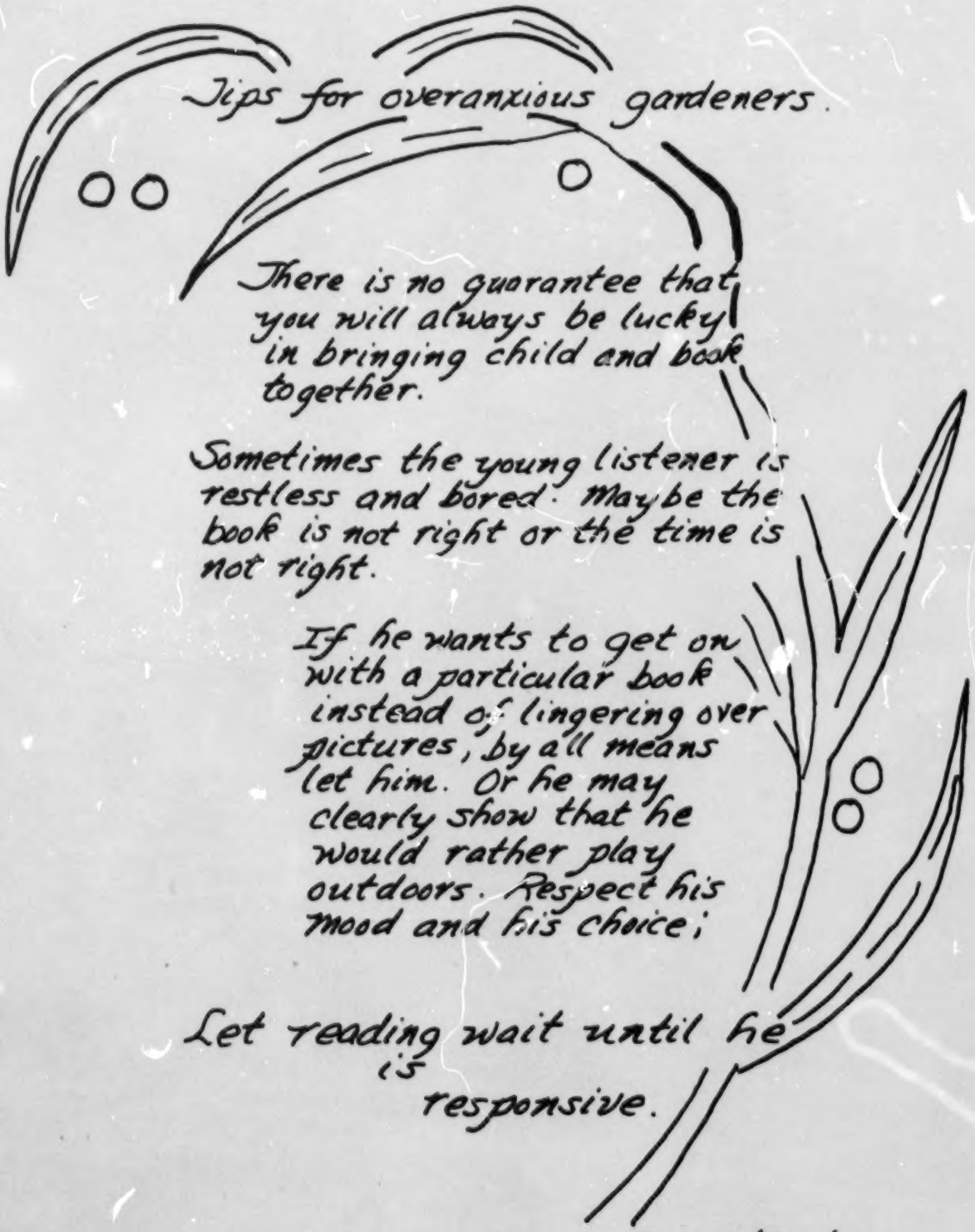
Point out all kinds of minute details in pictures so that your child will look for them each time he handles the book later on.

Let the child interrupt to ask questions whenever he likes.

Ask if he can guess how the story will end.

Encourage laughter and spontaneous remarks.

Relate the experiences and illustrations as much as possible to the child's own experiences.


Tips for overanxious gardeners.
There is no guarantee that you will always be lucky in bringing child and book together.
Sometimes the young listener is restless and bored. Maybe the book is not right or the time is not right.
If he wants to get on with a particular book instead of lingering over pictures, by all means let him. Or he may clearly show that he would rather play outdoors. Respect his mood and his choice;
Let reading wait until he is responsive.
Be patient..... don't expect results overnight.

# Late bloomers....
# Garden pests....

Talk with your child's teacher about any problems you are experiencing at home.

Visit your child's class and assist in the reading program there.

Remember the parent and teacher are partners in the reading program. Share your concerns for the best growth of your child.

# Listen to your Reader

Not only is it important for you to read to your child but it is extremely important that you also....

Listen to your child read.

And listen to him tell about things he has read.

Enjoy Your Reader

# Sprout

You will see your reader begin to sprout as you...

Get your child interested in a story before you start reading. As you discuss the title and pictures, ask him what he expects the story to be about.

Keep your child thinking about the story..... by stopping occasionally to discuss.... what has happened?... why did it happen?... what will happen next?

Read a thick book in parts. Begin each session by discussing what happened in the story the last time.

As you enjoy your reader Sprout...
.... soon you will....

# Delight when your reader Buds

The most important help you can give when your reader begins to bud is to make sure he is focusing on the meaning of what he is reading.

Gardening hints....

- Do not make a child stop while he is reading to sound out a word or compare it to another word.... tell him the word quietly and go on.
- Do not stop your child if he miscalls a word that does not matter - like saying "the" for "that".... by doing so you distract him from the thought in the sentence or paragraph.
- If your child miscalls a word that shows he does not understand what he is reading, tell him the word.

.... Then.....

Be happy with your blossoming reader

and most importantly
Tell him so !

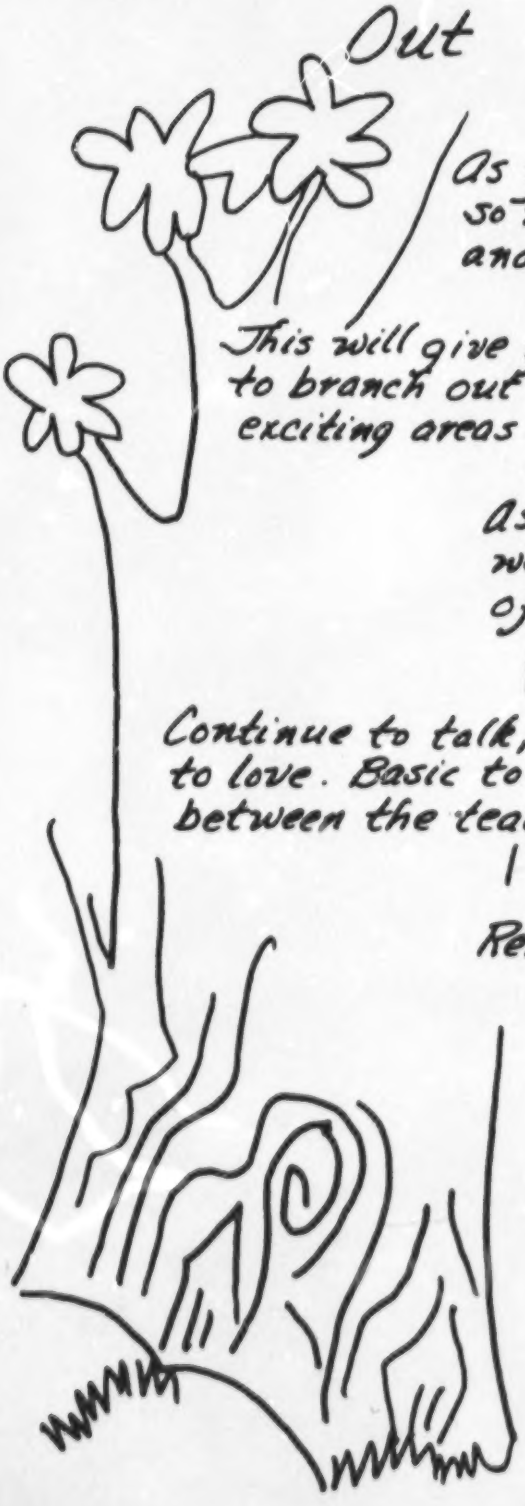
Tell him how

Beautifully

he is doing .....

.... and how beautiful he is !

# Branch Out



As your reader matures... so will his interests broaden and change.

This will give you the opportunity to branch out and share new and exciting areas of interest.

As this happens your child's world broadens and new seeds of interest are planted.

Continue to talk, to share, to listen, and to love. Basic to all learning is the relationship between the teacher and learner.

Remember....

You are the most important teacher your child will ever have!

# roots for the future

You now have those all important roots for the future.

Roots that say....

reading is fun

reading opens horizons

I like to read!

and a ....

parent child relationship that adds much more to the child's life than reading success.

Hey!

Check
that
thumb
of
yours .....

with your gardening success ...

I'll just bet
it's turned
Green!

# Other useful Gardening Guides

- Arbuthnot, May Hill
  *Children's Reading in the Home*

- Frank, Josette
  *Your Child's Reading Today*

- Larrick, Nancy
  *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading*

- Lenski, Lois
  *Adventure in Understanding*

- Tinker, Miles A.
  *Preparing Your Child for Reading*